

February 12, 2025

Re: SB 923 Letter of Support

My name is Brennan Garrelts, and I am a resident of Douglas County, Oregon. As a father of two young daughters, the son of two former Douglas County public school teachers, and a volunteer coach and board member of community non-profit organizations, I have witnessed firsthand the challenges our rural community faces. I am here today to advocate for SB 923 and the significant benefits it could provide to improve our community.

This project is not just about building a facility; it is about investing in the future of our children, our economy, and our overall well-being. Douglas County has faced meager growth and numerous economic struggles for years and has never fully recovered from the Great Recession. Our poverty rate is far too high, and we need new ways to drive economic growth, support jobs, and provide safe spaces for our children. A recreation facility is a proven way to achieve these goals.

Building a facility of this size in Douglas County would bring numerous benefits to our community. Most importantly, it would provide a safe and structured environment for our children. As you know, youth sports and other structured physical activities provide numerous benefits to the body and mind of children. In a world of instant information and gratification, youth sports and other structured physical activities are more important than ever to help grow resilient future citizens who have experience in teamwork, adversity, and leadership. As a youth soccer and basketball coach and a father, I can attest that our current facilities are not sufficient to meet the demand for sports and other recreational activities.

Moreover, the economic benefits of a complex like this cannot be overstated. Roseburg is strategically located between the Southern Willamette Valley, the southern Oregon Coast, and the Greater Medford urban areas, making it an ideal location for hosting regional events. Sports tourism in this state is a multi-million-dollar industry that many communities like ours have successfully tapped into. Currently, it is our community's families who are taking their money out of the community as they travel to events in Eugene, Salem, or Medford. A local complex would help keep that money here while also attracting teams from across Oregon and beyond, something our community would greatly benefit from.

To be clear, this isn't just about sports—it's about economic sustainability and opportunity for the youth in our rural community. It will enhance the physical and mental well-being of our youth, stimulate economic growth, and provide a safe and inclusive space for all residents. I urge you to consider the profound positive impact this project will have on our community and support its funding.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Brennan Garrelts